



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 February 2026

by **Martin H Seddon BSc MPhil DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/M0655/W/25/3376215

11 Hickory Close, Woolston, Warrington, Cheshire WA1 4EQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Miss Jennifer Williams against the decision of Warrington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 2025/00797/FUL.
 - The development proposed is retrospective change of use from garden outbuilding to barbers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have determined this appeal on the basis of the Council's description of development as it is a more precise specification for the proposal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbours in respect of noise and disturbance, and privacy, and the effect on the viability of the local economy.

Reasons

Living conditions

4. The appeal building is a single storey garden outbuilding with an associated patio area and located near the rear boundary of the garden of 11 Hickory Close. Hickory Close is a cul-de-sac and part of a large modern development of mainly two storey detached dwellings which are closely spaced and with front and rear gardens.
5. The appellant submits that the use would operate with limited opening hours and carefully managed parking arrangements to minimise any impact on the local area. The proposed hours of use would be 2 hours each day on Tuesday and Wednesday, between 10:00 am and 5:00 pm; intermittent hours between 10:30 am and 7:30 pm on Thursday and Friday; between 8:00 am and 2:30 pm on Saturdays and closed Sunday and Monday.
6. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has raised no objections to the proposal and suggested conditions to limit noise and restrict hours of operation. The Highway Authority has also raised no objections and advised that the

business would operate on an appointment-only basis, no other service would be provided other than hair cutting and would be open for limited hours. It considers that this controlled approach would significantly reduce the likelihood of overlapping customer visit and help to manage parking demand. The site has two off-street parking spaces on the existing front driveway which the Authority considers to be sufficient to support the proposed use.

7. However, even with the proposed reduced hours, I consider that the use would have some potential adverse impacts on the living conditions of neighbours in this residential area where properties are close together. This is because of the level of activity caused by customers coming and going to the premises and potential for noise and disturbance. The presence of strangers passing through the rear garden area would be likely to cause loss of privacy where there is the possibility of overlooking from the windows of any neighbouring houses. Although a condition is suggested to control the hours of operation, that could prove difficult for the council to enforce.
8. I find therefore that the proposal would conflict with policy ENV8 of the Warrington Local Plan which seeks, amongst other things, to protect general amenity, including the need to respect the living conditions of existing neighbouring residential occupiers in relation to loss of privacy, noise, and disturbance. It would also conflict with Local Plan policy DC1 which indicates that development in suburban areas will need to be in-keeping with the existing character of the area, which in this case is residential.

Viability of the local economy

9. The appellant indicates that the barbershop is a micro-enterprise, providing approximately 8–10 appointments per day, which they consider to be well below the threshold of a commercial retail use. In addition, that the scale of the business is such that occupation of a town centre unit would be financially disproportionate and unsustainable, directly contrary to the intent of planning policy to promote viable growth.
10. The appellant submits that no evidence exists that the use would displace or threaten viable commercial units, rather, it offers a complementary, community-based service. The appellant claims that the sequential test is not realistically applicable to a sole-trader, home-based business, and even if applied, there are no suitable or viable premises in centres at the scale required. Moreover, it is claimed that the business sustains local economic resilience by supporting self-employment and meeting a specific local need.
11. However, even if the hours of operation were to be maintained there would still be a significant number of clients per week using the premises. A barbershop is a commercial activity which provides employment and therefore Warrington Local Plan policies DEV4 and DEV5 are relevant. Policy DEV4 sets out the Council's strategy in relation to employment land, whilst policy DEV5 sets out a hierarchy of centres for retail and leisure uses.
12. Although the proposed use is restricted in scale it could still have a potential impact on the viability of similar small scale facilities within recognised centres. The nearest local centres to the appeal site are Parksway and Dam Lane in Woolston which are both located less than 1 mile from the appeal site.

13. The proposal is for a commercial use that would lie outside of the nearest local centres and within a residential area. The application is not supported by sufficient evidence to demonstrate that no suitable sites are available within centre or edge of centre locations. I therefore find that the proposal is contrary to the requirement of Local Plan policies DEV4 and DEV5.

Other Matters

14. The appellant has submitted a list of draft planning conditions. However, I consider that these would not be sufficient to outweigh or resolve the conflict with development plan policies. I have had regard to the wider considerations referred to by the appellant in the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of sustainability. Although the benefits regarding inclusivity and community value are cited no specific evidence has been provided in this respect.

Conclusion

15. I acknowledge the submission in support of this small business and the benefits referred to by the appellant regarding self-employment. However, it would be an incompatible commercial use in this residential area. I find that the proposed change of use conflicts with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations to indicate that the development should be permitted, despite the policy conflict.

Martin H Seddon

INSPECTOR